

## The Spectators

Martha Klein

ONE RAINY day as I was riding the local downtown bus, I consciously observed the facial expressions on the passengers. The nervous movements of a young Negro woman caught my attention first as I glanced to the front of the bus. She seemed very excited about where she was going, and a warm smile appeared on her face as she caught my eye. Nearer the bus driver sat an elderly woman glancing at the floor. Her serene expression seemed to be a subtle indication of a gentle nature acquired through many hard but rewarding years, and she looked like someone's benevolent grandmother. In the row just behind her a large man was looking all around the bus. In his confident expression I perceived a note of conceit as well as one of self-indulgence. The woman across the aisle was smiling proudly at something she had just said while conversing with the woman friend who sat next to her. The latter seemed eager to converse and, in short, was a picture of congeniality. As I scanned the whole group, I noticed that each person was absorbed in his own thoughts and scarcely cared about what the others were doing.

The congenial woman got up to leave the bus. Her cheerful good-bye at once brought her to our attention, and we watched her descend the steps. Then someone in the right aisle burst out, "She fell!" This was followed by the anxious screams of the woman, who now lay on the curb. The rainy weather had made the steps slippery, and she had fallen and broken her leg. For one brief moment all minds ran in the same channel; we were terrified but thankful that it had not been one of us.

It is interesting to note how each individual's personality traits become magnified under tension. The jerky, nervous woman abruptly got up and left the bus by the back door. The last we saw of her was seconds later, when her bobbing head vanished around the corner. Two of the injured woman's acquaintances at once ran out to console her, and they held an umbrella over her head. The elderly lady calmly sat in prayerful meditation, and, although she seemed concerned, she patiently remained in her place. My heart swelled when I looked across the aisle. The woman whose friend had been hurt now wore an expression of misery because someone so close to her had been the victim of the accident. The shock was so much that she covered her ears and lay down on the seat to avoid all contact with the human suffering. But there is always one person who has no compassion in happenings such as this. The man who looked so satisfied had crossed the aisle to get a better look at the commotion in the street. As he turned again to strut up and down the aisle, a sadistic smile appeared on his face. This smirk seemed to say, "Look! Isn't this

something?" His smile broadened as he saw the crowd outside grow bigger.

Within fifteen minutes a police car arrived. The injured woman waited quietly until nearly twenty minutes later when the ambulance came. All of us breathed a sigh of relief as the bus continued its journey, and we felt thankful that we had not been the one to live through such an experience. The majority, however, failed to realize that they had made the most of the accident. If the tables were turned, they would have been angered to see so many curious onlookers before them. Instead, most of the people who were present had moved where they could get a better view, and in some cases they barred the way of those who came to help.

## The Game

Jim Waggoner

OUR RACE is clean and pure and has been since the beginning of time, while that of the enemy is the most disgraceful ever imagined. Was it not they who initiated war so many ages ago? My king, the saddest of men, has watched his country slowly collapse until there are only a few of us left. He has witnessed the black invaders kill and destroy. Even his fair wife, my queen, has been brutally slain by the lance of the enemy's bravest knight. Was this not more than enough to warrant their complete extermination?

Now that both sides are close to the final battle, it is very important that we win. To me, it is obvious that the world will be better off as a result of this war. Must not God forgive all men who kill to better the welfare of mankind? Thinking such as this has placed each great country where it is. Thinking such as this has been the cause of rapid development, necessity being the mother of invention. To man, not without that fighting spirit in his bones, victory in a great war is a most satisfying experience. Ah yes, Milord Bishop White, I know only so well that you disagree, should you happen to be reading this. You will make the flat declaration that no good has come from our war, nor will good come from any war; but what would have become of us had we not fought the blacks? It is obvious that you have not considered . . .

But wait! What is happening down there at the far end? Our rook has snared the brutal black king. A voice high above in the cloudless sky utters dispassionately, "Checkmate." Ah, victory is sweet. Was it not all worth the long struggle, the killing, the loss of life? We have won, and all we have fought for has turned to gold. We have . . .

Now the very earth quivers beneath our feet at our long awaited victory. Quivers, nay! It is sloping, tilting inward from each horizon. My dear God! Humanity is being swept into a common wooden grave. But why? Why? It is we who have won! It is we!